

Michael's Story

(For Helen – Safeguarding Self Neglect Reflection: what really matters: care, kindness and consideration; Working Together to make a real positive difference)

Michael is an exuberant and cheerful Ex-Actor with a lust for life and a diagnosis of Alzheimer's dementia. *'The Bill'*, *'Sherlock Holmes'* and *'Colditz'* were just some of Michael's many credits and he met his ex-wife on *'The Avengers'* set. Michael is able to talk intelligently about his work in film, theatre and television. As Michael got older, he started to get fewer parts and began trading in coins, what he terms as *'Treasure'* off a stall in the Portobello Road. Every weekend Michael would set off with two boxes stuffed full of coins and watches. Michael often bought items at Portobello and his living room table was full of watches and medals. Michael loved his cluttered flat.

However, Michael found it difficult to remember to self-care and often forgot about food on the cooker and set off numerous fire alarms. Michael often got ill from eating out of date food. Michael was referred into the Integrated Care Borough MDT. Steven Patterson, Complex Care Nurse, Christella Antoni Memory Service Nurse and I started to work with Michael to address the home environment taking care to work around what mattered to Michael. I would pick up two free coin collector newspapers from the Coin Shop opposite the British Museum and read these with Michael, which he enjoyed with a cup of tea and a biscuit. I supplied Mr Wynne with a 'safety' cooker but he still repeatedly forgot his cooking on the stove. However, I consistently worked and 'discovered' his family to support Michael at home and managed to get him a grant from Hampstead and Wells. Michael was then eating frozen *and* out of date food (two years), often making himself ill, and becoming increasingly confused. He was however always charming and kind. Michael politely turned away carers but finally *'Just about'* accepted an Enhanced Homecare Service (EHC), a project that enables community nurses to delegate non-essential clinical tasks to a homecare provider (The service can be accessed by community nursing and remains under their clinical oversight). The GP, district nurses and memory service nurse were increasingly concerned. The neighbours were very worried about a fire.

Looking back there was consistent work with Michael and his family to keep him safe at home including two Family Group Conferences and home visits with the Fire Brigade and Careline. We installed hard wired smoke alarms in each room;

hall, two bedrooms, reception room, dining area, heat alarm in kitchen and a gas alarm installed in the kitchen given the numerous times the fire brigade had been called, it seemed prudent to take this course. We put two carbon monoxide alarms in the reception room and kitchen and kept an eye on the gas safety certificate. We replaced the cooker, and finally arranged)to disconnect and cut off the gas oven, to attend to supply and install a two ring Baby Belling table top hob/oven.

At the Family Group conference, Michael stated that his past and present wishes would be to remain at home, however he would '*Consider*' moving to a residential home where there were other Actors. He was very specific about this and Michael discussed his Equity membership at length before standing up and reciting a full verse from Hamlet much to the delight of all at the meeting, including his wife and daughter and especially Peter Collins the FGC co-ordinator.

By the end of May we still had ongoing concerns about Michael and the ongoing risks of living at home. We considered that we had in the past had those FGCs and built upon the support of his sister, wife and daughter. However, we were at the stage where the risk was so high that a placement seemed the only safe option. Suzanne Joels, the psychiatrist at the MDT, was interested in Michael and his history and recommended Denville Hall a Residential Specialist Ex- Actors placement.

I completed a Mental Capacity Assessment for Michael. We had a Best Interest meeting with Michael, his wife, daughter, Christella from the Memory Service, Keith Williams Fire Brigade, Steven Patterson Complex CareNurse and Philip Smith GP. The BI decision was for the specialist actors placement Denville Hall and this was approved and authorised by Bernice Solvey, who was also concerned about Michael's case, noted his filmography and supported the decision.

I had a very interesting and tiring day with Steven Patterson CCN taking Michael, to Denville Hall. When I arrived with Michael (*It was **not** an easy journey* because Michael did not know where he was going and became understandably very anxious. Michael had alighted from taxis, trains, buses, sat down and refused to move).However the proactive and welcoming staff at Denville ushered us in to

the Dining Room and there was a waiter/waitress! Yes! Even in Covid times!. Mr Wynne had three portions of Shepherd's pie and Chocolate Fudge cake and ice cream and we were surrounded by these people (Ex-Actors) we '*Kind of*' recognised. It was strange, especially after this nightmare journey. Michael immediately noted the beautiful grounds. I noticed a fine-looking plate inscribed '*To Denville Hall from Dicky*' and I was told it was from Richard Attenborough who had stayed there with his wife. Michael actually bumped into an old Thespian colleague and we left him talking to her. Evidently, Michael had a whiskey on his first night in The Library '*To settle him in you understand*'. I look forward to the review.

Best wishes

Martin

Martin Hampton

Social Worker

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